

VZCZCXRO0435
RR RUEHCN RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHPB
DE RUEHGZ #6294/01 0660952
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 070952Z MAR 06
FM AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9823
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHLG/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GUANGZHOU 006294

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/CM
STATE PLEASE PASS NIH
USDOC FOR 4420/ITA/MAC/MCQUEEN, CELICO, DAS LEVINE
STATE PASS USTR
USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: Guangdong Government Reaction to AI: Fast but How Effective?

(U) THIS DOCUMENT IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY. NOT FOR RELEASE OUTSIDE U.S. GOVERNMENT CHANNELS. NOT FOR INTERNET PUBLICATION.

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Guangdong Provincial and Guangzhou Municipal governments' reactions to the recent March 2 human avian influenza death were both rather swift and resolute. Both levels of government held emergency meetings and resolved to limit the sale of live animals in Guangzhou's markets and restaurants. In general the measures parallel the reaction taken by the region during the SARS crisis. For example, airport authorities have also considered mandating temperature checks at the major airports in Guangdong province. However, the real question is whether these measures are comprehensive enough and likely to be effective. END SUMMARY.

Guangdong Provincial Government Reaction

12. (SBU) On March 6, the Guangdong Provincial Government convened a working meeting to communicate instructions from the Party Secretary Zhang Dejiang and the Governor Huang Huahua (both

SIPDIS

of whom are in Beijing attending the National People's Congress). Executive Vice Governor Zhong Yangsheng chaired the meeting in their place and offered six key tasks that government departments should implement to minimize the AI threat. The six tasks include:

- 1) Improve early detection and response;
- 2) Conduct comprehensive screenings at hospitals;
- 3) Strengthen epidemic surveillance and forecasting;
- 4) Implement a full vaccination policy with every breeding farm required to maintain records of vaccinations and follow-up antibody tests to check efficacy;
- 5) Strengthen entry/exit inspection and punish illegal trading in sick and dead poultry;
- 6) Improve scientific investigative skills and training for local veterinarians and health workers.

Guangzhou City Reaction: Going with the SARS Plan

13. (SBU) As of March 3, Guangzhou had activated a Level III emergency response alarm, in accordance with the city's latest emergency plans. A few of Guangzhou's best hospitals have been designated to handle future AI cases dealing with children and the most serious cases. (Note: Many of these hospitals held similar responsibilities during the SARS crisis. End note.) Under the current alarm system, people with respiratory diseases must wear masks when they go to a doctor.

14. (SBU) On March 6 the government ordered animal sample investigations, which were taken from all 12 of the "wet markets" the AI victim frequented. The reported results were negative. On that same day, Guangzhou Mayor Zhang Guangning convened a meeting and announced that the live animal "wet markets" in the city should close on a rotating basis for one day a week. Mayor Zhang also requested that live animal sales be limited in restaurants. The efficacy of such measures is questionable. The Nanfang Metropolis Daily reported that at one closed market, some vendors are secretly selling live poultry by putting the caged chickens

SIPDIS
in the toilet just beside the stand.

15. (SBU) Finally the Guangdong Airport Group convened an emergency meeting on March 6 to discuss possible activation of temperature checks at its four main airports, namely the Baiyun Airport, Shantou Airport, Zhanjiang Airport and Meixian Airport. Such measures were used during the SARS crisis as well.

Comment: Guangdong Needs More than Just Talk

16. (SBU) Hong Kong officials banned live poultry imports from Guangdong for at least 3 weeks. Zhong Nanshan, Director of

GUANGZHOU 00006294 002 OF 002

the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases has warned the situation could be worse than it appears. Zhong argues the latest AI case proves that live poultry might carry the virus and other animals, for example, cats and pigs, might carry a mutated virus as well. The local government reaction is a good first step, but government transparency remains a big concern.

DONG